

REMARKS

Claims 1-9 are all the claims pending in the application.

In the last Office Action Claims 1, 3, 4, 7, 8 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Le Blanc USP 5,001,625. Claims 2, 5 and 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Le Blanc.

Le Blanc USP 5,001,625 discloses and teaches a process for carrying out catalytic hydrocarbon reforming reactions, wherein the high temperature reaction products obtained in an exothermic catalytic steam reform 8 and in a reformer exchanger 13, which constitutes an endothermic catalytic steam reforming zone, respectively, are combined together and used as heating fluid for the above endothermic catalytic steam reforming zone (reformer exchanger 13). See for instance column 4, lines 4-18.

According to the present invention, the heating fluid for the (reforming) endothermic reactions and the products of such reactions are totally distinct, the latter being not used as indirect heating source of the endothermic reactions. This distinguishing feature has been set forth in the claim 1 as amended. Therefore, it is clear that the process of the present invention is of a totally different type with respect to the process of Le Blanc (US 5,001,625) which cannot be compared or confused therewith.

It should be noted that Le Blanc is totally silent about the technical problem to be solved by the present invention and that such a problem would have been solved by the claimed process (page 6, lines 22-31, page 7, lines 5-8 and page 8, lines 2-21). Thus, the present invention is concerned with a totally different technical problem and the claimed solution thereof is clearly

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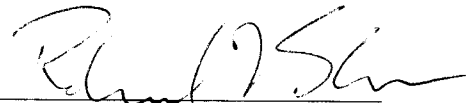
Group Art Unit 1764
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not disclosed or suggested by Le Blanc. Therefore, it is submitted that Claims 1-9 inclusive are clearly patent able over Le Blanc.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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